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Dear Editor:

The outrageous sarin gas attack on innocent Tokyo commuters emphasizes the inadequacy of conventional intelligence and law enforcement agencies to cope with threats of this kind. Such agencies are doing a magnificent job, and they deserve our support, but they can't do it all by themselves. This is the kind of challenge that requires an active, well-trained, and well-organized militia.

Switzerland and Israel provide the best examples today of what is needed: to provide every person, starting from childhood, training in military, law enforcement, and disaster management skills, and to organize people for community protection, from the level of the local neighborhood up to the level of the nation and beyond. With everyone organized and trained, the community becomes a very difficult environment for terrorists. With everyone vigilant, it becomes much easier to prevent incidents, and to manage them if they should occur.

But more than preparation for threats to the community, the exercise of training and organizing the entire population would break down the barriers of anonymity that now prevent us from acting as a community, and would go a long way to restoring the sense of individual responsibility and community involvement in every area.

The Framers of the U.S. Constitution contemplated that this country would maintain the strong militia tradition it had when it was founded. Unfortunately, we have allowed that tradition to fade, and we are now paying the price for it. We need to revive the constitutional militia, as provided in Article I, Section 8, and the Second Amendment, of the U.S. Constitution. There is now a growing movement to do this.

But there is opposition to this movement, because with such empowerment of the people comes a threat to the nerve gas of crime that now pervades every institution of society, both public and private. An active militia is liable to bring about an end to drug trafficking, which finances much of that crime, or to rigged elections or construction contracts, or to insider financial dealing that is robbing Americans of their savings. The criminals can buy off key judges, legislators, bureaucrats, or law enforcement agents, but it can't buy off the entire population which comprises the militia.

Jon Roland

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